

**TOWN OF NORTHFIELD
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
Minutes of February 10, 2014**

- I. ROLL CALL.** Select Board Chair John Quinn III, Selectmen Chris Bradley, Brad Denny, Matthew Gadbois, and Kenneth W. Goslant. Also present were Town Manager Rob Lewis, Acting Clerk Ken McCann, James Dziobek (Police Chief), John Malter (MRRMA Administrator), Sonya Bourne, and Kathleen Lott (*Northfield News*).

Prior to the regular meeting, the Town Selectmen held a Public Hearing beginning at 6:03 p.m. for the purpose of obtaining written or oral views regarding the Town's intent to apply for a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) to be obtained by the Town of Northfield from the State of Vermont under the Vermont Community Development Program (VCDP). The proposal is to apply for \$16,500 in CDBG-DR Funds which will be used by the Town of Northfield to seek funding to hire an architectural firm to develop a plan to relocate the EMS portion of the current facility located at 31 Dog River closer and/or in adjunct with the current Fire Station at 128 Wall Street. This plan will include design for a new structure to be placed next to the fire station and to best utilize second floor space of the Fire Station for EMS services. The Town will be obligated to a ten percent (10%) local match, which is \$1,650.

Chair Quinn asked if anyone wished to discuss the proposed grant application. As there were no questions or comments, the Public Hearing was closed at 6:05 p.m. The regular meeting began immediately.

- II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE.** The Board members and the public were asked to rise and recite the Pledge of Allegiance.

- III. SET/ADJUST AGENDA.** There were no changes to the posted agenda.

IV. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

- a. John Malter, Administrator, Mad River Resource Management Alliance (MRRMA).**

Mr. Malter was present to provide his annual in-person update regarding MRRMA activities last year as well as those planned for the coming year. As in past years, the major events during 2013 were the two (2) Household Hazardous Waste Collections held at the Harwood Union High School in Duxbury last May and October. 390 households took part in these collections and about ten percent (10%) of the participants were from Northfield. Before the collections, all residents of MRRMA member communities are sent reminder postcards. There were comments last year that some Northfield residents did not take part last year because they consider Duxbury to be too far away. Mr. Malter is now looking at the possibility of holding a satellite collection in Northfield this year. A date and location will need to be determined and there also will need to be some local volunteers to help out.

Mr. Malter added that e-waste recycling remains a very popular program. Last year, sixty-one (61) tons of old computers, printers, monitors, televisions, etc. were recycled at no cost to the customer. Casella Waste Management is the new contractor to handle this but this change should not affect customers. Collection of old tires also takes place throughout the year but there is a surge each spring as the backroads and riversides are cleaned out on Green Up Day.

Starting this year, the Product Stewardship program will include latex-based paints as well as oil-based paints. The old paints will be reprocessed and reused for other purposes. This is required due to a new state law and the paint industry is encouraging this program.

Mr. Malter noted that Act 148 with its universal recycling mandates will be phased in over the next few years. For example, transfer stations will be required this year to accept recyclables at no charge. Next year, this will expand to include free curb-side recycling. Mandates regarding composting and other recycling of foodstuffs also are going into effect. He added that foodstuffs and packaging materials now are major sources of landfill waste.

In conjunction with this mandated recycling of kitchen waste, Mr. Malter would like to have a location in Northfield where the compost bins that MRRMA sells at a discounted price could be stored prior to purchase. There also will need to be a local person who could take in payments when the bins are sold. Manager Lewis stated that he would coordinate with Mr. Malter on this matter as well as the proposed satellite household hazardous waste collection here.

The Moretown Landfill remains closed as the Vermont Agency of Resources (ANR) is still asking questions about the facility's groundwater management, etc. Negotiations over when and if the landfill will reopen are ongoing between ANR and the landfill owner (Advanced Disposal). As a result of the loss of income from the operation of the landfill, the per capita charge that MRRMA assesses its member communities will rise from \$2.50 to \$2.75 this year. For Northfield, this means an annual payment of \$17,065.

Selectman Denny noted that in Mr. Malter's written report, it states that MRRMA has worked with the Washington West Supervisory School District to collect over forty (40) tons of food scraps. He asked why there is no similar program operating in Northfield schools. Mr. Malter stated that there is a plan for the Grown Compost Program to work with Northfield schools on a similar program. Selectman Denny felt that this program should not just be in the planning stages; Northfield residents are paying the same per capita charge as other member communities and thus should be receiving the same services. Mr. Malter said that he is working to make sure that this is accomplished. Selectman Denny would like to see a timetable for when these new services would come to Northfield. Chair Quinn suggested that Mr. Malter could return to the Board with an update in the next month or so. Mr. Malter would be glad to return with an update on this matter as well as the other concerns he will be coordinating with Manager Lewis.

Selectman Gadbois asked if MRRMA had any other projects on the horizon. Mr. Malter stated that MRRMA will be working with its member communities to develop local ordinances that would penalize those who don't comply with new state recycling mandates. He also will need to look into new locations for storing the increased amount of recyclable materials.

Selectman Gadbois noted that when the special election was held last fall (11/19/13) to determine whether Northfield should leave MRRMA and rejoin the Central Vermont Solid Waste Management District (CVSWMD), some of the local private haulers had been among the leading advocates for the ultimate decision to stay in MRRMA. He asked if MRRMA has been working with them on some of the major issues addressed tonight. Mr. Malter confirmed that he has been in contact with Eric Davis (All Clean Waste Services) and Scott Benoir (Scotty B's Trucking) regarding new recycling mandates and other matters.

Chair Quinn thanked Mr. Malter for attending tonight and looks forward to getting an update on MRRMA member services in the near future.

V. DEPARTMENT HEAD REPORT

- a. Police Chief James Dziobek.** Chief Dziobek stated that he, Manager Lewis, and the Police Department's union shop steward met recently to discuss a solution on how to limit overtime expenses. Chief Dziobek believes that the Northfield Police Department (NPD) should have 24/7 patrol coverage without any associated overtime costs. To accomplish this, Chief Dziobek would like two (2) teams of three (3) officers each working either day shifts (6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.) and night shifts (6:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m.). There also would be one officer serving a "swing shift" for a twelve (12) hour period that overlaps the day/night shifts. Each NPD patrol officer would be expected to work a total of eighty-four (84) hours during the two (2) week pay period. There is an exception ("Garcia Act") to the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) that allows police officers to work this many hours within a two-week payroll period without triggering required overtime pay. Implementing this plan also would require that NPD is fully staffed with six (6) full-time patrol officers.

Manager Lewis asked if the Select Board needed to take any action to permit this change. Chief Dziobek stated that management would need only to accept and acknowledge this new work schedule. Chair Quinn agreed that the Select Board does not have responsibility for setting work schedules. Manager Lewis asked when this plan could be implemented. Chief Dziobek stated that union rules require a fifteen (15) day notice.

Selectman Denny asked if part-time officers and overtime expenses would remain due to full-time officers being on vacation, sick leave, testifying in court, etc. Chief Dziobek said that this was unavoidable. Selectman Bradley asked how NPD officers felt about the proposed schedule. Chief Dziobek said they favored it since the longer shifts would result in more full days off. Selectman Bradley asked if there was any real need for police coverage between 2:00 a.m. and 5:00 a.m. Chief Dziobek stated that emergency callouts during this timeframe were largely responsible for excessive overtime expenses. When an off-duty officer is brought in for an emergency, there is a minimum three (3) hour overtime expense.

Selectman Goslant asked if the Vermont State Police and the Washington County Sheriff's Office were ever used for backup coverage in Northfield. Chief Dziobek said that he would call them in if they were ever needed. Selectman Goslant noted that Castleton also is a college town but it seems to get by with only three (3) full-time police officers. He added that Randolph also has fewer police officers than Northfield. Selectman Denny stated that the Randolph Police Department only patrols their designated "police district," which only covers the same area as the former Randolph Village. The rest of Randolph relies upon Vermont State Police coverage. He added that many towns with nearby state police barracks (including Castleton) rely upon them to supplement their local police departments. Selectman Denny hopes that the state legislature will act to evenly distribute these barracks around the state so that additional communities could take advantage of this.

Selectman Bradley has looked at the police logs printed in the Northfield News and it seems to him that NPD responds to about three (3) or four (4) incidents each day. Chief Dziobek noted that due to ongoing investigations and privacy issues, he cannot publicize all of NPD's activities. He did confirm that the casework is getting done.

Chair Quinn asked why NPD cannot hire already state-certified full-time officers that will not require the additional expense of being put through the Police Academy. Chief Dziobek replied that this has been a goal for some time but just hasn't happened. Selectman Denny suggested that with Northfield's relatively low tax base, perhaps it cannot afford to outbid other police departments for certified officers. Northfield often puts young officers through the academy only to see them leave after they have fulfilled their contracted obligations. Selectman Denny hoped that the proposed new work schedule might lead to more officer retention.

Manager Lewis asked if the new work schedule would result in the elimination of the overtime line item in the NPD budget. Chief Dziobek said that this would not be possible because you cannot plan when officers will take sick time, etc. However, he expected the overtime expense to drop by at least twenty percent (20%). Chair Quinn asked whether part-time officer expenses also would go down. Chief Dziobek thought it would as he expected the part-time officer's workload to decline by about ten (10) hours each per week. Manager Lewis added that we would be better able to tell if this new work schedule is having the desired results once a thirty (30) day test period has been completed. Chair Quinn said that there appeared to be a potential for some real savings.

Selectman Goslant still feels that other staffing issues should be considered in order to save taxpayer money. Chief Dziobek said he will continue to discuss possibilities with Manager Lewis such as finding ways to make Northfield a more desirable destination for experienced officers. These reasons aren't always monetary in nature but sometimes include such factors as a more positive community attitude towards local law enforcement.

Chair Quinn then thanked Chief Dziobek for his presentation tonight. Selectman Goslant appreciates the enthusiasm that Chief Dziobek has shown in serving Northfield. Selectman Bradley thanked him for the candor expressed tonight in regards to these difficult issues.

VI. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- a. **January 28, 2014 (Joint Board Meeting).** Motion by Selectman Bradley, seconded by Selectman Goslant, to approve the minutes. **Motion passed 4-0-1, with Selectman Gadbois abstaining.**

VII. APPROVAL OF BILLS

- a. **Warrant #16-14.** Motion by Selectman Bradley, seconded by Selectman Denny, to approve Warrant #16-14 in the amount of \$74,407.65. Selectman Bradley asked about a truck towing expense. Manager Lewis stated that when the clutch fan on the Mack truck broke down, the Town Mechanic went on site and he wisely recommended having the vehicle towed back to the Town Garage in order to prevent further damage. Selectman Goslant asked about new charges for tire chains. Manager Lewis said that this should be the final bill for tire chains this winter. Each vehicle should use no more than two (2) sets each year. Selectman Gadbois asked about the purchase of additional sand. Manager Lewis said that he reported the need to purchase an additional thousand (1000) yards at the Board's first meeting in January (01/13/14). He hopes that no more will be needed. The highway crew is being encouraged to focus delivery to hills and corners. He added that salt purchases seem to be on target but we have gone way over on sand. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
- b. **Approval of Bi-Weekly Payroll through February 2, 2014.** Motion by Selectman Bradley, seconded by Selectman Gadbois, to approve the bi-weekly payroll in the amount of \$52,105.19. Chair Quinn hopes that NPD standby and overtime costs really will go down as the new work schedule is implemented. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

VIII. LIQUOR CONTROL COMMISSION

- a. **Liquor License Renewal Applications:**
 - 1. **Champlain Farms.** Motion by Selectman Bradley, seconded by Selectman Denny, to approve the liquor license renewal. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
 - 2. **Cumberland Farms.** Motion by Selectman Bradley, seconded by Selectman Denny, to approve the liquor license renewal. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
 - 3. **Norwich University.** Motion by Selectman Bradley, seconded by Selectman Denny, to approve the liquor license renewal. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

b. Tobacco License Renewal Applications:

- 1. Champlain Farms.** Motion by Selectman Bradley, seconded by Selectman Denny, to approve the tobacco license renewal. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
- 2. Cumberland Farms.** Motion by Selectman Bradley, seconded by Selectman Denny, to approve the tobacco license renewal. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

IX. SELECT BOARD

- a. Public Hearing & Joint Board Meeting: Monday, February 24, 2014.** The Board's next meeting in two (2) weeks will be held jointly with the Village Trustees. It will be preceded by a Public Hearing at which members of the public will be able to comment on the funding articles that will be voted on by Australian Ballot on Town Meeting Day (03/04/14).
- b. Status Reports: Various Projects.**
 - 1. Economic Development Committee.** Selectman Goslant had prepared minutes of the last meeting (01/29/14). Selectman Bradley thanked him for their thoroughness.
 - 2. Town Highway Subcommittee.** Manager Lewis would like to hold a meeting next week (02/19/14) to discuss some new developments in the RSMS program.
 - 3. Winter Carnival.** Chair Quinn noted that the Northfield's inaugural Winter Carnival will be held this coming Friday (02/14/14) and Saturday (02/15/14). There are quite a few activities that will be taking place on and around the Village Common. The full schedule of events is available at the municipal website and other locations.

X. MANAGER'S REPORT. Manager Lewis asked if there were any questions and/or comments regarding his written report.

- a. Smith Hill Culvert Replacement Project.** Selectman Goslant noted that the State now is requiring that Northfield hire a contractor to install these culverts rather than have the Highway crew do it. Manager Lewis confirmed this was the case and he was disappointed with this change. Selectman Goslant felt that it was better that the Highway crew now will be able to focus on road maintenance.
- b. Animal Control.** Chair Quinn asked where the "Random Rescue" animal holding facility was located. Manager Lewis said that it was in Williamstown. He added that by holding stray dogs there, Northfield will be able to fully collect penalty charges. This was not happening when strays were being taken to the Humane Society.
- c. Vehicle Tracking Program.** Selectman Bradley has been working with the Town Mechanic to determine the optimal computer equipment needed to perform this. Originally, the purchase of a Toughbook® tablet was considered but he now thinks a regular laptop computer will be sufficient. He added that the Town Garage already has wireless capacity.

XI. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: Non-agenda items

- a. Kathleen Lott, Highway Department Staffing.** Ms. Lott asked if there was an empty position in the department now that there no longer is a Highway Superintendent. Chair Quinn stated that this position was slated to be eliminated when the next fiscal year started (July 1, 2014) but there was a recent decision not to wait until then. Manager Lewis added that Highway Department staffing issues are in flux and that he would rather not discuss specific personnel issues outside of executive session.

XII. ADJOURNMENT. Motion by Selectman Bradley, seconded by Selectman Goslant, to adjourn. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

The Board adjourned at 8:02 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kenneth L. McCann

Kenneth L. McCann, Acting Clerk

An audio recording of this meeting is available in the Town Manager's Office.

These minutes were approved at the Joint Board Meeting of February 24, 2014.